

TESTIMONY
GM 313

Testimony Before the Senate Committee on Water, Land and Agriculture

February 19, 2010

Wilson Kanakaole

Land and Natural Resources Commission

Chair Hee, members of the Senate Committee on Water, Land and Agriculture, mahalo for letting me share a brief background about myself.

Being born with the birthright of Hawaiian descent here in Hawaii, I was raised in Lahaina, Maui in the 1970's and 1980's. Later I graduated from Hana High School and started working in the hotel industry, as well as, performing as an entertainer at one of Maui's best luau shows for about 20 years.

Living in Kaeleku, Hana and spending a lot of time learning, as much as, I could from my kupuna's, I saw the need for protecting the resources, as well as, burials sites, etc.

I feel I am committed to do this and I embrace it as a part of my kuleana duty with my kupuna's who continue to walk with and carry me in preserving and protecting the iwi's (bones) of our ohana.

Mahalo for your support,

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- (1) Why do you wish to be a member of the Island Burial Council, Islands of Maui and Lanai?

I believe being nominated to be a member on this Burial Council is part of a Birth right given on a spiritual level to be a voice for the public, as well as, others. I welcome the challenge and commitment.

- (2) How do you perceive the role and responsibilities of a member of the Island Burial Council, Islands of Maui and Lanai?

I perceive the role as a member of the Island Burial Council to be committed in preserving and protecting the burials of our ohana.

- (3) Given your understanding of the role and responsibilities of a member of the Island Burial Council, Islands of Maui and Lanai, why do you believe that you are qualified for the position? Please include a brief statement of your skills, expertise or knowledge that would aid in your decision-making ability as a member of the Island Burial Council, Islands of Maui and Lanai.

Being in the music industry for over 20 years enabled me to meet people of all sorts from all over the world, which is why I feel I am very capable in getting along and being able to work well with others. There is also a lot of respect and love I have for this aina (land) and culture we call Hawaiian.

- (4) What do you hope to accomplish during your term of service?

As a Island Burial Council member I hope to work and strive in strengthening communications in various areas.

- (5) Name three qualities that best describe you and that would make you stand out. How would these qualities benefit the Island Burial council, Islands of Maui and Lanai?

Three qualities that best describe me and that would make me stand out are spirituality, honesty and integrity. Having a spiritual insight can only come from a higher source when doing the right thing only then can we as a Burial Council preserve the integrity and most of all the iwi (bones) of our ohana.

- (6) Name one previous experience that would make you stand out. How would this benefit the Island Burial Council, Islands of Maui and Lanai?

I am currently registering and mapping out together with the Historical Preservation Department in protecting my family burial site in Kaeleku, Maui just walking distance from one of the largest heiau's in the state of Hawaii, Pi'ilani Hale. Whatever flaw's I might encounter I

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hope can help the Island Burial Council in setting positive and effective guidelines and recommendation to state and county departments.

- (7) Can you foresee any possible conflicts of interests that could arise during your service on the Island Burial Council, Islands of Maui and Lanai? How would you overcome any possible conflicts of interest?

Living in a small town where jobs are few, self employment is how lots of the resident along Maui's East Coast make their living. It's hard to turn the eyes when another family member is operating a piece of heavy equipment building or grading acre's of land with possible sites. Preserving one's integrity would be the approach in order to reach a compromise. Certain laws pertaining to this may need to be changed or modified if not addressed now.

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